

San Rafael Cactus

Pediocactus despainii

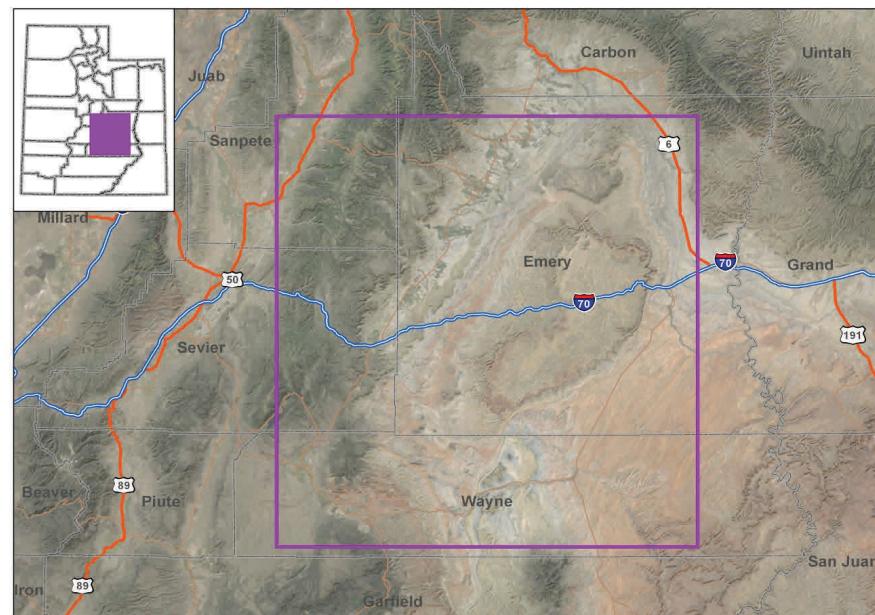


Flowering San Rafael Cactus / D. Clark

What does the San Rafael cactus look like?

The San Rafael cactus (*Pediocactus despainii*) is a small barrel shaped cactus. It typically grows as a single plant but can form multiple stems. These cacti are very small, only growing up to 2 inches tall and up to 3.8 inches wide. Spine clusters are located at the tip of fleshy protrusions and are composed of 9 to 13 radial spines up to half an inch long. There is no central spine. The flowers are peach to yellow, tinted bronze, and measure about 1 inch across. Flowering occurs from April through May.

With its diminutive size and peculiar habit of shrinking underground for several months a year during dry or cold seasons, the cactus is often only noticeable for a short time in the spring, when in bloom. Otherwise, even if the exact



Species Range / USFWS

location of its populations are known, it may not be seen and is easily overlooked.

San Rafael cactus is similar in appearance to the Winkler cactus (*Pediocactus winkleri*). Winkler cactus, though, has matted hairs at the center of the spine clusters.

Where does the San Rafael cactus occur?

San Rafael cactus is endemic to Emery and Wayne counties in central Utah. It occurs on benches, hilltops, and gentle slopes in open piñon-juniper and salt desert scrub communities between 6,000 to 6,700 feet in elevation.

San Rafael cactus is restricted to limestone gravels, shales, clays and silty substrates of the Mancos, Morrison, Moenkopi and Carmel formations.



Daniela Roth / USFWS



San Rafael cactus habitat / USFWS

Legal Status under the Endangered Species Act

The San Rafael cactus was listed as endangered on September 16, 1987 (52 FR 34917).

Why does the San Rafael cactus need protection?

When we listed the San Rafael cactus, the primary threats were over collection for horticultural purposes, exploration and development of energy and mineral resources, recreational impacts from off highway vehicle use, and small population size. In addition, predation by beetles, drought, and impacts from grazing are significant threats to the species.

What have we done to recover the San Rafael cactus?

In 2007, we published a recovery outline that guides recovery efforts and informs consultation and permitting activities until a comprehensive recovery plan for the species is approved.

We are developing a recovery plan that lists necessary actions to recover the species and remove it from the list of endangered species. We are working with our Federal, State and private partners to implement recovery efforts. We surveyed for additional populations across the range of the species and monitored some populations to get a better understanding of threats and population trends.

What do we need to do to recover the San Rafael cactus?

Until we finalize the recovery plan, we will work on actions identified in the recovery outline, including:

- Protect existing populations and their habitat by implementing effective conservation measures.
- Prevent collection of San Rafael cactus.
- Survey suitable habitat and locate additional populations.
- Implement ecological studies and monitoring to determine

population trends and life history.

- Increase public awareness through education efforts.

More Information

To learn more about the San Rafael cactus and conservation efforts on behalf of the species, please visit the following sites:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program's website contains Federal Register notices and recovery documents: www.fws.gov/endangered

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation (IPaC) System is a resource project proponents can use to find out about sensitive resources within the vicinity of a proposed project: ecos.fws.gov/ipac

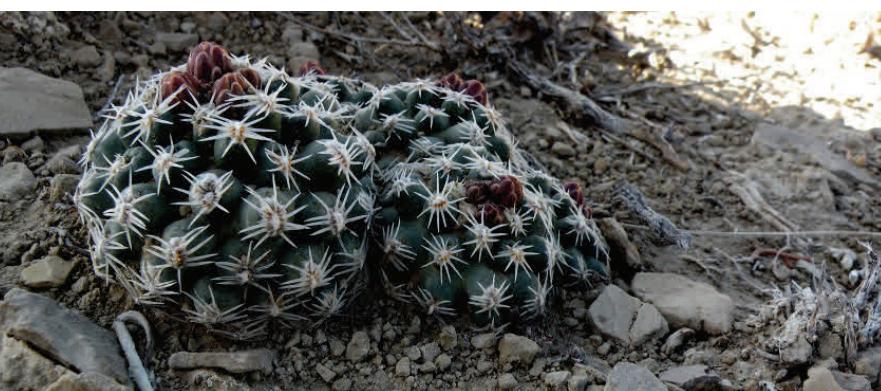
The Mountain-Prairie Regional Office's website contains an overview of listed plant species: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/plants/>

The Utah Field Office's website contains species leads and important information regarding federally listed species in the state, including a copy of this fact sheet: www.fws.gov/utahfieldoffice

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Region 6
PO Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225
Utah Field Office
(801) 975 - 3330

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